

Help Your Gifted Child

Help Your Child at Home and at School

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- Listen.
- Let your child have time alone to daydream.
- Value the individuality of your child. Don't expect uniform giftedness and/or achievement.
- Help your child understand and accept his/her giftedness.
- Set realistic expectations for performance at home and at school ¾ advanced intellectual ability may make the child seem older and more mature than he/she is.
- Go places: museums, historic sites, new cities, national parks, universities, libraries, etc.
- Provide opportunities to explore many different areas of learning and physical activity.
- Encourage your child to pursue his/her interests and to specialize in specific areas.
- Start early to teach study skills, research skills, time management, goal setting, and task completion.
- Help your child make choices and allow him/her to live with the consequences of those choices.
- Provide opportunities for your child to be with mental peers (others who share similar intellectual ability or interests).
- Provide lots of books, paper, pens and pencils, and building toys.
- Encourage your child to begin writing early by dictating stories to you and later by keeping a journal.
- Praise for effort as well as for accomplishments. Watch for perfectionistic tendencies.
- Discipline to teach rather than to punish.
- Teach independence skills (how to do laundry, cook, clean, etc.) and assign work responsibilities.
- Provide moral training and opportunities for service to others.

Advocacy = Active Support for Your Child

- Start with the assumption that you are an equal partner in your child's education. You are your child's first teacher and you know your child better than anyone else does.
- Learn about the needs of gifted children, an appropriate education for gifted children, and your rights as the parent of a gifted child under North Carolina General Statutes, Article 9B, Academically or Intellectually Gifted Students, section 115C-150, enacted August 3, 1996.
- Each school system in North Carolina has its own locally-developed plan for identifying and providing appropriate educational services to each academically or intellectually gifted child. The plans must meet the framework required in Article 9B.
- Participate. Volunteer to serve on your school system's gifted program evaluation team or your local School Improvement Team. Prepare for and attend teacher conferences, parent group meetings (PAGE, PTA), school functions, and school board meetings.
- Improve your skills ¾ communication, documentation/letter writing, record keeping.
- To address concerns about your child's needs, follow the school system organization chart, beginning with your child's teacher(s), principal, then system administrators. Allow sufficient time at each level for changes to be made before going to the next person.
- Be pleasant and positive (and persistent when necessary).
- The federal P.L. 94-142, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act [IDEA], does not apply to gifted children.

(Adapted from "Five Steps to Becoming Your Child's Best Advocate," in the March 1988 ECAC Newsline.)

Documentation

- Documentation consists of your child's records, your notes and copies of letters about meetings with teachers and administrators about your child's educational program and/or school behavior.
- Keep copies of all test results and reports on your child.
- Meetings with and phone calls to teachers should be logged in a notebook with the date and a brief description of the purpose of the meeting or phone call.
- All requests for services and statements of concern about situations at school should be in writing and addressed to the principal of the school.
- Discussions which involve requests and decisions about a child's program should always be followed by a letter which includes the following:
 - Thank you for the meeting or phone call.
 - What was discussed.
 - What was decided.
 - When it will be done and when and how it will be evaluated.
 - Any additional concerns.
- And write to say thanks when someone does a good job!